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BROOKS KUSHMAN P.C./FGTL 1000 TOWN CENTER 22ND FLOOR SOUTHFIELD, MI 48075-1238				REAGAN, JAMES A
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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Application Number: 09/707,111
Filing Date: November 06, 2000
Appellant(s): DAY ET AL.

MAILED

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GROUP 3600

John S. Le Roy
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 03 November 2004.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

A statement identifying the related appeals and interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the decision in the pending appeal is contained in the brief.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of the claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Invention

The summary of invention contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Issues

The appellant's statement of the issues in the brief is correct.

Examiner's Note: Appellant labels this section GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL in the brief.

(7) Grouping of Claims

The rejection of claims 1-18 stand or fall together because appellant's brief does not include a statement that this grouping of claims does not stand or fall together and reasons in support thereof. See 37 CFR 1.192(c)(7).

(8) ClaimsAppealed

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

Examiner's Note: One minor exception to this rule is the Appellant's apparently unintentional failure to provide a *clean* copy of the claims. Claim 1 contains an underlined word, which appears to be nothing more than a typographical oversight, which does not impinge upon the scope of the claims in any noticeable manner.

(9) Prior Art of Record

6,161,113 A	MORA et al.	12-2000
5,530,861 A	Diamant et al.	06-1996
5,548,506 A	Srinivasan	08-1996

(10) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora et al. (US 6,161,113 A) in view of the Applicant's own admission, and further in view of Diamant et al. (US 5,530,861 A).

Claim 1:

Mora, in column 1, lines 13-18 discloses, "*Collaboration software*, also referred to as *groupware*, is a type of computer software designed to enable workgroups and individuals to collaborate and share knowledge regardless of geographic boundaries and time restrictions," essentially disclosing more than one disparate group collaborating on a project in a "virtual room" (such as is provided by Lotus Notes), and the limitation of *receiving from one member of the first members and the second members an issue document*. In at least column 6, lines 18-47, Mora discloses project document security, effectively disclosing *restricting dissemination of the issue document to the reviewer*. In addition, Mora discloses security features of a document such as who has access rights to edit a document, essentially disclosing a *list identifying potential reviewers for the issue*, (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Security procedures concerning a document inherently disclose *identification of a reviewer for the issue* (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Applicant, in the background of the specification discloses program and project management and collaboration tools such as Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino, the use of e-mail to send messages over a LAN, WAN, or through the Internet, using homepages and hyperlinks, separate organizations which are required to communicate over a distance with regard to a collaborative project, and security restrictions concerning access to corporate intranets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding the current collaborative project management environment with Mora's project management notebook because enhancing the structure and communication abilities of remotely located project teams across a range of distances allows

groups to readily and efficiently share and approve related documents and issues, keeping projects on time and reducing wasted time and expense.

Neither Mora nor Applicant specifically disclose *automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time, or automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated*. Diamant, however, in at least column 6, lines 37 to 66 discloses automatic archiving, and in column 9, lines 27-35 discloses automatic deletion. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Mora/Applicant with the common tasks of auto archive and delete because these project management techniques maintain document currency while minimizing the clutter of unused files.

Claim 2:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *receiving from the reviewer and escalation approval; and*
- *escalating the issue document to a management function;*

Mora, in column 10 lines 52-67, discloses senior executive review, essentially disclosing the hierarchical approval process, which send issues and documents to senior management after approval at the project manager level.

Claims 4, 5, 6, and 7:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *forwarding a notification to the reviewer;*
- *the notification comprises an electronic mail message;*
- *including in the notification a link to the issue document within the virtual team room;*

- *the link comprises a hypertext link,*

Mora, in at least column 24, lines 1-10, discloses notifications. The Applicant, as shown above, discloses email messages and hyperlinks. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding email and hyperlinks with Mora's use of notifications because using an email message with an embedded link and/or hyperlink is an efficient way to send documents to reviewers, as well as providing a link to the work space in which the group meets and shares ideas and documents.

Claim 8:

With regard to the limitation of *the first members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a first network and the second members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a second network, disparate from the first network*, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, inherently disclosing that two separate groups may be linked to a common environment across separate and distinct networks.

Claims 9-14:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *the first network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*
- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*
- *the second network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*

- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*

The combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose secured and unsecured networks, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporative entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its own organization. The Examiner takes Official Notice that it is old and well known in the computer networking arts to establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft, fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information. In addition, it is well known that the Internet in general is considered an unsecure network, with smaller secured networks contained within and adjacent to the Internet.

Claim 15:

With regard to the limitation of *the virtual team environment comprises a team work tool supported on a server*, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, essentially disclosing a computer server.

Claim 16:

With regard to the limitation of *providing a security server coupled to the virtual team environment and verifying the identity of the first and second members using the security server*, the combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose identity verification of team members, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporative entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its

own organization. The Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the computer networking arts to establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft, fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information, as well as requiring the use of authentication procedures such as, for example, user ID's, passwords, and biometric verifications and authentications.

Claims 17 and 18:

The combination of Mora/Applicant/Diamant discloses project management tools and techniques already familiar and well-known in the project management arts. This combination does not specifically disclose:

- *automatically generating one or more assignments relating to an issue specified in the issue document;*
- *automatically communicating the one or more assignments to one or more team members associated with the issue;*
- *defining a team calendar for the virtual team room accessible by team members;*
- *wherein the team calendar includes one or more specified event;*
- *linking one or more news items to one or more of the specified events;*

However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the project management software application arts to select and utilize a software tool such as, for example, Microsoft Project, which contain a Gantt-style chart and calendar for automatically scheduling and assigning tasks to team members, to facilitate project efficiency throughout during its life cycle. As is known by those of ordinary skill in the art, Microsoft Project uses the state-of-the-art Microsoft Office Suite to schedule, plan, assign, and monitor projects in concert with email, word processing, and other well-known integrated office components.

With regard to the limitation of *upon a specified event passing, automatically deleting or archiving the one or more news items linked to the specified event which has passed*, see the rejection of claim 1 above.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora/Applicant/Diamant in view of Srinivasan (US 5,548,506 A).

Claim 3:

The combination of Mora/Applicant/Diamant discloses the collaborative project management environment as shown above. Mora/Applicant/Diamant do not specifically disclose *the potential reviewers comprise a leader of the virtual team room and a delegate of a leader of the virtual team room*. Srinivasan, however, in column 3, lines 6-8 and 30-32 discloses task leaders and project leaders, as well as a hierarchy of leadership positions in the program. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Mora/Applicant/Diamant with Srinivasan because establishing various leadership positions within a project team delegates authority while ensuring that multiple tasks are completed on time on within other project constraints.

(11) Response to Argument

Issue 1

Appellant, beginning on page 3 of the brief, asserts that Diamant does not teach or suggest the limitations of:

- *automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time, or*

- *automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated.*

Specifically, Appellant states, “Diamant does not teach automatic notifications where an issue document has become dated.” It appears as if the Appellant is attacking the references in a piecewise fashion, instead of in combination, as intended by the Examiner and as shown above in the rejections under 35 USC § 103(a). As shown, Mora, in at least column 24, lines 1-10, discloses notifications. Diamant also discloses various automated actions to include an automated notification process in at least column 4, lines 59-61; column 5, line 18; column 6, lines 37-39; column 9, lines 27-29; column 10, lines 43-44; etc.

Appellant asserts, “Diamant makes no suggestion of archiving documents, or automatic notifications regarding same.” The Examiner respectfully disagrees and points to column 6, lines 37-39. In combination, Mora and Diamant disclose a project management system capable of automatically archiving documents tasks i.e. schedules, digital events, media, and automatically notifying the user of the scheduled events. See also, Diamant, column 6, lines 25-29, column 17; lines 24-25; and particularly the scenario beginning at column 22, line 4. Clearly, Diamant discloses auto-archiving and notification of scheduled events.

Appellant fixates on Diamant’s discussion regarding automatic deletion. However, as written in the claim language, the Appellant does not claim both automatic deletion and automatic archiving. He claims both in the alternative. Since it has been clearly and precisely shown that the rejections above fully disclose these features of the claimed invention, the Examiner respectfully disagrees with the Appellants allegations against the outstanding rejection.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Application/Control Number:
09/707,111
Art Unit: 3621

Page 11

Respectfully submitted,

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Art Unit 3621
December 7, 2004

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